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THE "NEW REVELATION" OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM

ATTITUDE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

By W. HARRISON

THE position of Spiritualism in relation to the Churches and orthodox religious beliefs has received particular attention in recent issues of LIGHT, notably in the Editorial articles of December 5th and January 23rd, and I feel that it is desirable at the present juncture to devote further thought and consideration to this all-important question.

The world is passing through one of its greatest crises, and, indeed, probably the greatest in its history; we are, in fact, witnessing the birth of a new era, and all existing institutions, political, economic, social, and religious, are about to be cast into the melting-pot, from which many believe there will emerge a New Order which will differ radically from all with which we are familiar.

The stupendous events and changes that are now in progress have long been heralded in many quarters—Tolstoi's *Vision*, Curtiss's *Coming World Changes*, Rachael J. Fox's *Rays of the Dawn on the New Testament* and *Unexpected Tidings of the Future*, Cheiro's *World Predictions*, etc.—and in some of these tidings or predictions the fate of the Churches and existing creeds has been expressly mentioned.

It is therefore helpful to turn once more to some of these predictions and to see what light they claim to throw on the matters under discussion. Will the people turn to the Orthodox Churches for their enlightenment, as stated in the Editorial of December 5th? My personal conviction is that they most definitely will not, and that view is borne out by the prophetic utterances quoted in my article in LIGHT of December 28th, 1939, from the writings of Rachael J. Fox (*Visions of Christ*) and the records of Pheneas, the spirit-guide of Conan Doyle, etc.

There has been more than ample time for the Churches to consider and decide upon their relation to the New Revelation presented by the teachings and testimony of Modern Spiritualism in all their fullness; but their attitude, with the exception of a small handful of

enlightened and courageous Clerics, who have stood out as notable exceptions, is still as hostile and uncompromising as ever.

It is surely a very striking and significant fact that no utterances of higher Spirit-Controls are to be found, to my knowledge, which in any way support the views and hopes expressed in some quarters that the Churches will ever absorb this teaching, and constitute the recognised channel through which the illumination and guidance, which is being conveyed to us in such abundance at the present day, will be received. On the contrary, the Guides are unanimous in stating that the very reverse will be the case, and the course of events since these predictions were made has confirmed their statements.

I would refer readers to the following paragraph in my former article: "Referring to the Church's assumption that God has spoken His final word to men through Christ, and that no further revelation is to be made, the Spirit-Guide of R. J. Lees (see *Through the Mists*, page 162), says: 'This compels the preacher to drop the role of prophet and assume the position of priest or lawyer. . . . The modern preacher is fitted for his position by a course of college or university education in the theology of schoolmen and the creed he is to expound; such is the lawyer. The prophet has always been selected for his power to receive and transmit the new revelation which God declares to the world. 'Hear now my words' saith God, 'if there be a prophet among you I will make myself known to him in a vision and will speak unto him in a dream.' Here is God's provision for a continual revelation."

THE "COSMIC CHRIST"

I would also strongly recommend readers to read, if they are not already familiar with it, that invaluable book by Mrs. Violet Tweedale, entitled *The Cosmic Christ* (Rider and Co., 1930), in which she claims "to reveal Christ in His cosmic significance as the Solar Logos, the Light of the World who has manifested through all the sacred Scriptures we possess," and she states:—

"The moment has come to sweep the mind clear of its mouldy, cob-webbed dogmas, to cleanse the windows of the soul and admit the broad beams of spiritual truth which will revolutionise the life and show the Cosmic Christ to be what He is—a supernal glory filling the universe. The Cross with the dead Saviour must give way to the living immanence of the Light of the World.

"In order to find Him, He must be searched for with the whole heart in every Faith, in all history. The folly of supposing that one Book and one Church only can contain the Son of God must go, with much also that is cramping the spiritual life and dwarfing its

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Divine Inspirer. When found, He will disclose Himself as the mighty Cosmic Lord who came forth from the spiritual sun of the universe, who has guided humanity from the beginning onwards."

The lines from Lowell's *Rhoecus*, quoted in *LIGHT* of February 6th, are very apposite in this connection:

"God sends His teachers unto every age,
To every clime and every race of man,
With revelations fitted to their growth
And shape of mind, nor gives the realm of Truth
Into the selfish rule of one sole race."

The New Revelation of Modern Spiritualism set forth in the teachings of Imperator, Celphra, Pheneas, Myers and other eminent Guides, is the latest of a series of progressive revelations to mankind. A new and vital message of highest import was imperatively needed to disentangle the truth from the confused mass of conflicting creeds and doctrines which have grown up around it.

That this Revelation has caused some bewilderment and hesitation among those who still adhere to the old-time orthodox beliefs is not in any way surprising. Such is invariably the case where new ideas and correction of old beliefs are disclosed to the human mind for the first time. Much mental furniture has to be discarded and some there are who stoutly declare that they refuse to give up the old ideologies; but the more vigorously, if judiciously, the pruning knife is applied, the richer will be the future crop of fruit. In due time many of those who are at present resting in the half-way house of Orthodoxy may decide to venture forth and proceed to tread the upward evolutionary path of spiritual progress and enlightenment; and those who have already left the fold of the Orthodox will never retrace their steps but will drink at the fountain fed by the new and ever-rising springs of illumination.

The circumstances of the present time find a parallel in those existing when Jesus of Nazareth came to minister to the needs of humanity 2,000 years ago. He

did not make His appeal to the intellectual and cultured classes of His time, knowing full well that much learning often goes hand in hand with little wisdom, but preached to the common people, the multitude, outside the established Church of the day, which rejected the new teaching and attributed it to Satanic agency. He also reminded His hearers of the folly of putting new wine into old bottles and of patching old garments with new cloth.

NEW TEACHINGS AND OLD BELIEFS

In the light of the new teachings, certain old beliefs must be jettisoned—notably the doctrine of the Trinity (see the communication published in *LIGHT* of January 30th, page 35), and the old doctrine of the Atonement. Conceptions of the Deity must be revised and immensely enlarged, and on the ruins of the old Orthodox beliefs will arise, not a new sect or religion, but the Religion of the Spirit World, as revealed by progressed Spirits of high degree, which must ultimately absorb all existing Religions and be universal in its scope, knowing no distinction of colour, caste, race, or creed.

The British Bible will then be seen in its true relation and perspective, and too long concentration upon the crucifixion of Christ will be replaced by greater contemplation and understanding of His exemplary life and teachings. The needs of modern life, however, make great inroads upon our time, and what little leisure remains for studying spiritual questions should be devoted more to a consideration of the knowledge and teachings which are being passed through the channels of mediumship from the spirit-world, rather than always to listening to an endless repetition of the familiar records of the religious life of a race and era which grows ever more and more remote from the world we know. These records are indelibly engraved upon our memories and will still be listened to, as time and opportunity permit, for spiritual sustenance.

The role of the preacher of conventional sermons, the product of the theological colleges, is, however, rapidly diminishing, and his place will be filled by the inspired speaker and the controlled Medium, who is now, and always will be, the mainstay of the Spiritualist movement.

Priests and theologians have had a long innings. Denunciations have been meted out to them not only by the leaders of our movement in the spirit-world, but also by leading thinkers of the present age (see the latest example, *The Betrayal of Christ by the Churches*, by J. Middleton Murry). They ousted the Mediums from the early Christian Church by an act of fallible human judgment. The time has now arrived, however, when those whose ears are attuned to the New Revelation have come to accept their instruction and guidance direct from the Messengers in the Spiritual Realm, speaking through their chosen instruments, the Mediums, as foretold in the following messages by Johannes and Imperator, writing in 1907 through the hand of "John Alleyne" (the late Captain John Bartlett) as set out in the book, *The Hill of Vision*, by F. Bligh Bond (pp. 6 and 7):—

"The changes need not alarm you. The reconstructions will be more perfect. Let the State fall in ruins and the outward garments of faith perish—fear not, for greater things will rise into being, great nations and great ideals. . . . The spark will live through the rains and will re-light dead fires, fire which is still fire, but with purer flame. Thus shall the light be re-lighted and shall shine on all the earth, a Temple set in the midst of a New Revelation where the wise shall worship as well as the simple, in the Old Faith reclothed with acceptance to the wider knowledge, and in the habiliments of modern intelligence."

* * * * *

(In next week's issue there will be an article by Mrs. St. Clair Stobart in which she will indicate what she believes to be the desirable relations between Spiritualism and the Christian Churches).

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THE AFTER-DEATH APPEARANCES OF JESUS

By ROLLIN C. OGBURN

LET us now remark some of the visits of the risen Spirit—Christ Jesus, which occurred during the six weeks prior to his ascension. Ten appearances are mentioned by the gospel writers, in all observed by not less than five hundred persons. There is a rich reward for those who will study this, because it shows what the spirit-body is like.

The disciples had all gone back to their former pursuits, "but the "women" could not turn away. I wonder if Pentecost and the subsequent organisation of the movement did not somehow hang on the faith and loyalty of those women?

Even a risen Christ could not force himself upon stupid, wayward men, but must go first where there was a devoted and faithful welcome—to the souls of those women waiting to the third day for him to keep his word and reappear.

And the same cause which made them wait and watch for His return enabled them to recognise Him when He came; namely, their advanced psychic and spiritual development. The same powers were afterwards unfolded in the disciples.

But they would scarcely respond to this first appearance with the same full comprehension which they would later reach. They could only take it a step at a time. Hence the necessity, which we will observe, that full materialisation (visible to the natural eye) should precede the etherialisation (visible only to higher perception).

That is what occurred; first the projection of the unseen body into a form visible to ordinary men and women, after which they (the disciples) were taken into the spirit-realm to see that body as it actually was and is.

This (I think) is a rational explanation, since psychic or spiritual perception is now demonstrable in a scientific manner, and no other hypothesis will account for all the incidents related.

His second appearance was in the ether-spirit body which could be seen only through psychic perception. It was awarded to Mary Magdalene. Peter remembered (*Mark 16, 9*) that she was the first one to see Jesus in his celestial body.

She had first seen the bright angel, while it was still dark, had ran to inform his disciples and had returned to the sepulchre. Daylight had come, and with it Peter and John, but they saw nothing except an empty grave. With deep disappointment they then went back home. But not Mary! Devotion and gratitude held her there where she had seen *Him* last, for she remembered that long ago He had released her from a horrible obsession.

Standing there weeping; not tears of grief, but of ecstasy, for she knew he had arisen; she slowly went blind as to physical sight, and began to see with the eye of spirit—she became clairvoyant and clairaudient. In this condition she saw Jesus enshrined in his glorious, eternal body (*John 20, 11-18*).

It was forty or fifty years before any of this was put down in writing and, since the number and order of these appearances was unimportant, it is only natural that the several writers should remember them differently. Otherwise collusion would be obvious. Paul thought that the third appearance was to Peter (*1 Cor. 15, 5-8*), but John remembered it as to seven of the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias (*John 21, 1-24*). At any rate, it is a notable psychical demonstration.

They had returned to their former occupation—fishing. All through the night their nets had taken nothing. As morning came they noticed a stranger on the shore with a little fire. He called to ask if they had caught any fish. When someone answered "No," He suggested that they try it on the other side of the boat. When they did so, not knowing why, they found the net filled with splendid fish. Then John said to Peter, "It is the Lord." A lesson in deep spiritual

truth followed which Peter, and the rest, were never to forget.

It is obvious, I think, that at this time the disciples saw Him with their natural eyes, being in no condition for spiritual or psychic perception. Therefore a materialisation was again necessary or they would not have seen Him at all. How patiently He worked with them to help them unfold their powers of spiritual perception! How well they succeeded may be seen in the record of their later work in the Book of Acts.

Next He appeared to the two on their way to Emmaus (*Luke 24, 13-35*), then to the ten—Thomas being absent, and again to the full group (*John 20, 19-29*).

The surprise is that Jesus should enter the room, both times, when the doors were closed and locked. This definitely indicates the other-world body and psychic perception. Space does not permit here a discussion of the other details involved.

It may be of interest to note that, in these two sittings, Jesus gave them lessons in unfoldment—"he breathed on them"—so that they might become conscious of the presence of a very great and exalted spirit in their midst (verse 22), which consciousness comes only through the highest form of spiritual sight.

About this time, or a little later, there occurred the second séance; then an appearance to James and then five hundred "brethren" (*1 Cor. 15, 5-8*).

Still other appearances are recorded; to Stephen (*Acts 7, 55-56*) to Paul, (*1 Cor. 15, 8*) and to John on the Isle of Patmos.

The old dogma of bodily resurrection has little support here. Modern scientific discoveries have reduced it to an improbability, while an ascension, in such a body, is obviously absurd.

But a new and salient hypothesis which has been demonstrated so often, so consistently and so conclusively, now stands out as a proven fact, namely, the incarnation of personality, in asomatic form, in a higher order of consciousness. (How else could I word it?)

What is that stupendous fact, translated into our own experience? Answer: *resurrection*. And what is resurrection? Answer: a new life with a new body in a new world. This is the incredible hypothesis which science has proven to be a fact. But before that it was proven over and over by the gift of mediumship.

Again some day spirits may mingle with us as Jesus did. "He (Jesus) manifested to His friends, walked with them, as we may one day walk with you" (*Imperator*)

KING AND COUNSELLOR

No need to search without for Wisdom's Law.

Our Higher Self is Judge, he holds his court
In silence, in the Light-washed mind and heart,
Where he alone is King and Counsellor.

Our inner ears are tuned to catch his words
Which settle in our minds like homing birds,
And, full of love and wise serenity,

They free our hearts from all anxiety.
When shall we realise that all we need

For our soul's health is not a man-made creed,
But Self-reliance which is God-bequeathed?

The "Christ within" is no mere form of speech
Through pious lips without conviction breathed,
But living, pulsing Truth, and all and each
Are Christs potential here and now, e'en though

Close barred are hearts where lives the embryo.
The hidden Light, when found and free to grow,
Will change our lives and fill us through and

through
With power undreamed of, Love and Joy and Peace
Which passes understanding, till release
From limits of the lesser mind's control,
Brings knowledge of our union with the Whole.

DOROTHY KENRICK.

Light

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EDITOR

GEORGE H. LETHAM

AS WE SEE IT

A DISAPPOINTING EASTER MESSAGE

SPIRITUALISTS who are also Christians—and they are many—find welcome confirmation of the New Testament Easter story in their own psychic experiences and in the experiences of others known to them or in the recorded evidence of scientific inquirers such as the late Sir Oliver Lodge or Sir William Barrett. To the literalists—those who try to believe it was the physical body of Jesus that rose from the tomb—many details of the story are puzzling: the sudden appearance and disappearance of the Master, His coming into a room through a closed door; but by Spiritualists these details are accepted for what they are—indications that it was the spirit-body of Jesus that was seen, either through clairvoyant vision (as by Mary Magdalene in the Garden) or through materialisation (as by the Disciples assembled in the upper room).

To such informed Christians, declarations like that made by the Bishop of Bradford (Dr. Blunt) in his Easter letter to his diocese, must be extremely disappointing. With a strange disregard of the present-day demand for knowledge, the Bishop proclaims his preference for "wishful thinking" in place of proof. "We believe," he writes, "*because we will*, and not because we logically must. . . . We cannot prove it (life after death) to be a fact. . . . But what we know by faith is infinitely more valuable and helpful than what we know by proof."

So that, to unbelievers and doubters of the Easter story—inside as well as outside the Church—the Bishop has no other message than that *they ought to believe because he believes* and without asking why he believes. He forgets, apparently, that the Disciples did not believe in the survival of Jesus until they were given complete proof by seeing and hearing and touching Him, and that Paul's conversion was not due to "wishful thinking" or to faith, but to seeing the risen Jesus and hearing His voice.

Fortunately, there are representative Churchmen with more regard for the value of evidence and more understanding of the needs of present-day human beings than Dr. Blunt. In his *Life of Christ* (Cassell), for instance, Dr. R. J. Campbell (formerly of the City Temple, London, and now a dignitary of the Church of England) first describes some of the outstanding incidents in the Easter story and then writes: "To the modern mind, such phenomena seem incredible, and so they might be were there no context for them, no category to which to relate them, nearer to our own time."

Better informed on these things than the Bishop—who rashly "rejects absolutely" what he calls the "pretended proofs and revelations offered by Spiritualism to convince us that life goes on after death"—Dr. Campbell sees the value of present-day evidence which supplies the credible "context" to the otherwise incredible New Testament stories, and also the scientific "category" revealed by Psychical Research, into which the events can be fitted.

It is regrettable that, in a time of war tragedy and strain, when people are crying out for assurance that human personality cannot be wiped out by bombs and bullets, and when—as noted last week—a Church of England Vicar (Rev. Jack Winslow) is publicly deploring that "the bulk of our population is . . . largely ignorant of the historic facts on which Christianity is based," the Bishop of Bradford should devote his Easter message to belittling and rejecting the only evidence by which the credibility of these historic facts can be demonstrated.

DOES GOD KNOW EVIL?

By BARON E. PALMSTIERNA

IN his review on *Widening Horizons* (LIGHT, March 20), Mr. Prevost Battersby has quite rightly drawn attention to repeated statements, both in this volume and in *Horizons of Immortality*, that God knows no evil and is unaware of the very existence of pain and suffering.

This conception, which at the time was new to myself and other receivers of messages, at first strikes us as a most extraordinary statement and seems to contradict fundamental beliefs in which we have been brought up. But we must not discard this conception without due consideration. It has merits which are easily recognised, and is not so foreign to human thought as we are inclined to think. It possibly marks another step towards further revelation of truth.

It is a fact that many sensitive characters, like Shelley and J. S. Mill, and some early Fathers of the Church who were influenced by Neo-Platonism, refused to believe in a God who was at least indirectly responsible for evil in all its appearances. They revolted against such an unholy Supreme Power. Even in these days of suffering, there are many who are shaken in their belief in a Father who allows evil to sway peoples on earth.

We also hesitate to think that innocence and purity, of a quality we expect in God, could contain thoughts associated in any way with evil. Whatever is in God rests permanently and for ever; and if we think that God knows evil, evil remains in power for ever, and cannot be finally defeated. This possibility makes us think what others have thought before us when they accepted a Logos and a legion of Spirits of high order under the Godhead to deal with the material world which had drifted away from the realm of innocence and light.

But "God is omniscient," it may be answered. What is conveyed by this term which, like omnipotence, is so freely and thoughtlessly used in theology? It cannot mean that God does or knows anything which has no correspondence to divine nature. The order and harmony in God, on whom all depend, cannot change in substance, or God ceases to be the power we assume. He would become a God of fight, as in olden times we believed, out to crush inimical forces. But would such an attitude correspond to the highest ideals we nurse in ourselves? And could the God we believe in break individual wills through sheer power? Is it not Love we think shall conquer all in the end, a love that never varies through knowledge of soiling sin in the object of love?

The point is that if we accept the teaching that God knows no evil, the responsibility for evil and the task to conquer its power falls altogether on ourselves and the helpers in the invisible world who stand by to assist us. We shoulder the duty to clean part of the universe from evil afflictions and cannot make God responsible for the continued existence of evil.

Here we touch delicate ground and may shrink from delving into it, because so many familiar features of belief are involved. It may be felt strange if our habit to ask God to forgive sins were unreal, because sin is unknown to Him. But when we realise that it is not forgiveness but change of heart in ourselves that is the only thing necessary, the situation looks different. This view corresponds closely to ideas in the East.

It would take too much space to expound the philosophical and theological views that accord with the ideas I have put down, but they do exist and seem to me to bring impressions of a greater degree of love and purity than ideas we traditionally hold.

Allow me, finally, to say that I have for years been reading Mr. Battersby's reviews and much appreciate their unbiassed sincerity and fairness.

MR. ASKEW WANTS TO KNOW

A CRY IN IGNORANCE

ANSWERS to questions are again prominent in the columns of LIGHT, and so perhaps someone, on this side or the other, can help me to answer the flood of queries poured out by my friend Askew in a recent letter. He writes:—

I have read some of the literature you suggested, describing conditions on what you call the Other Side, but I fear that I am more perturbed than reassured. You will remember that a favourite theme of H. M. Tomlinson is the survival value of beauty. I have no doubt of its survival value; what I ask is "Does it survive?" I do not mean does it survive machines and wars and Dictators; it would be treason to our faith to doubt this; I mean, will the things we find lovely in this life exist in the next; shall we be able to take them with us through the veil?

Here, let us say, I have loved a wife, a child, a friend, and you assure me that when we have all gone beyond I shall be able to renew that love in even greater measure. But supposing that I can say, like Rupert Brooke, that "I have been so great a lover," is it true of one's personal catalogue of loves, as he seemed to think, that

"... these shall pass,
Whatever passes not, in the great hour,
Nor all my passion, all my prayers, have power
To hold them with me through the gate of Death."

I could spare the "wet roofs beneath the lamplight" and "the strong crust of friendly bread," but shall I never again hear the G Minor Symphony of Mozart, never again await, with exquisite anticipation, the first entry of the solo instrument in the Beethoven Violin Concerto? Has Beethoven himself, freed of his physical deafness, ever heard his own Ninth Symphony, or only as a thought projection?

Caruso is "over there," but shall I hear him sing

Che Gelida Manina, without the aids of a steel point on a plastic sound-track? Shakespeare is there, but will a Tree or an Ainley still declaim his majestic lines? Charles Laughton may be there before me, but shall I again hear the superb modulations of that voice rising from a menacing suavity to an impassioned roar?

Maybe I am wanting the best of two worlds—all this and Heaven too! Perhaps I cannot hope to savour "the wind on the heath" or the tang of a seaborne gale as well as the zephyrs of Paradise. And yet, will you tell me that the music of a Mozart and the poetry of a Keats belong only to a material plane?

Oh, I have read the descriptions of the unearthly loveliness of surroundings on the Other Side; colours such as were never seen on Earth, ethereal harmonies transcending the supremest achievements of mortal musicians, celestial flowers, scenery and so on; everything, in fact, superlative, and all superlatively vague. I have seen it stated that in the spirit-world I shall only have to think of a thing and it will be there; a country scene, flowers, trees, music, even a whisky and soda. But these are either generalities or else simple things easy to call to mind. What, however, if I desire a complex experience such as a symphony by Brahms or a play by Shakespeare; shall I be limited to what I can recall of these? And who will play the one or the other, or will they just happen, by means invisible and unknowable?

I merely question, and seek an answer that will give encouragement to face what is to come. Perhaps my ideas are confused, but not more so than the impressions I have received from what you have had me to read.

* * *

Well, these are the things that Mr. Askew wants to know. Is there anyone who can help him?

H. J. D. MURTON.

PASSING OVER—WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE

THERE are many souls in your world to-day who are not aware of the fact that life will continue after death. To them this one life is all.

Now it will come to pass that they shall be called upon to join the ranks of those who fight for their lives and, mayhap—nay, it were a certainty—amongst the number shall be some who will be required to sacrifice their life on the earth-plane. How then, when they awake to find themselves on the shores of this new land which they know not? They will not at first believe they have passed from the earth and their terror and bewilderment at finding themselves bereft of speech and sight will be terrible indeed.

Then, in their trouble, shall come those who will say to them by name, "We are friends," and shall endeavour by words and kind reasoning to declare unto them that they are dead indeed, but have commenced life anew.

Then, if such an one has on earth led a life not blameless, but passing fair, shall the light come to him and he shall see that all around him are those with kindly faces. And presently he shall arise, though weak of body and his guard shall then direct him to his habitation.

But, as he is left alone, again may come the desire for contact with those on earth whom he so lately loved. He shall grow restless until again they come to him and say, "You shall be with them, though not in the flesh," and at once by thought will he descend into the earth dimensions and there see his loved ones, bemoaning their hard lot in having "lost" the one they loved. Then he shall speak to them, but they shall answer him not and he shall try to teach them, but they will bewail the more, not understanding that he is among them. At length, in sorrow, by the aid of his Guide shall he return and there be instructed in such things as have just passed.

For a short period shall he rest until his body once more recovers its vigour, though not of the earth-world. Later, he may attain to the habit of speaking to his beloved through their inner ear or through the intermediary of a "tuner."

Thus shall he come to understand how the two worlds, though apart, are one, and shall look forward to the time when in due course his loved ones, too, shall join him.

But how far better it would be if, before his journey to our plane, he could believe that this were but a transmigration and thus, when passed over, straightway join with us and his loved ones.

Now it would seem to me that this should be told to every man to save him from much agony of mind, except that all are not as yet ready for this message—but the time will come.

(Received from "Script-Writer," through the hand of Mrs. Vera Dutton.)

A DAILY PRAYER

A correspondent of *The Friend* sends in the following suggestion for prayer:

"When the world we have known is crashing into ruin about us, when helpers fail and comforts flee, give us the will unreservedly to trust Thee, realising that Thou abidest, that Thy truth is eternal and at all times relevant, that in our weakness Thy power is made perfect; that when all else fails, Thy Love will endure and triumph. We pray Thee to give us moment by moment the strength we need to face and to use faithfully each situation as it comes, to witness at all times to Thy Truth and Love, so that Thy name may be glorified among men."

A LITTLE "TU QUOQUE"

By ALAN HOWGRAVE-GRAHAM, Pretoria.

ON September 20th, 1940, appeared a trifle of a contribution by me, in which I recorded circumstances attaching to a peculiar "rap" sound, which I had concluded was explicable by "normal" causes, but which afterwards received quite unexpected and unsought corroboration, as being a rap, through the mediumship of a lady whose powers I have experienced and tested over a long period, powers which attracted much attention in the British press some years ago.

On November the 7th, only, appeared a very belated and somewhat surprising comment on this contribution by Mr. J. Cecil Maby, to hand on December the 11th, only three days ago.

Now I have read with appreciation many thoughtful articles of Mr. Maby's, and hope to read many more, and it is therefore with some little regret that I note some of his remarks on the present occasion. In view of the present position regarding overseas mails, it may again be some time before this, my reply, can appear. Mr. Maby will therefore understand that to engage upon a protracted discussion or argument on the points he raises would be quite impracticable. It is thus circumstances, not want of courtesy or interest, that compel such observations as I now make to be my only and final rejoinder, and a full one.

Mr. Maby asserts that—"the Medium . . . may very well have been tapping memories and ideas in my own mind."

Truth to tell, I had thought that even in S.P.R. circles this fantastic notion of any Medium being able with ease to read the buried memories in any sitter's unconscious, as if she were casually perusing to-day's *Times*, had been at last decently interred in the burial-ground of the Things Best Forgotten. However, as it seems not, what does the idea in this case actually mean?

It means that the "percipient" Medium "may very well" have been "extra-sensorily perceiving"—I suppose that is the up-to-date formula—the occurrence of an incident forgotten by the "agent" sitter three weeks before. That she was sensing this incident in spite of the fact that he was neither remembering nor thinking about it, having dismissed it as more probably attributable to everyday physical, instead of (what I call) parapsychical causes. This incident she was now somehow unearthing from his subconsciousness, and not only doing that, but in direct contradiction of the view of the incident itself which he himself had formed, was gratuitously attaching to it a reversion to the "paranormal" explanation. Further, in order to support this attitude, her mind was dramatising or dressing up the whole by inventing a totally imaginary clairaudient-hearing of spontaneous contradictions of and comments on his interpretation, by the entity falsely purporting to have produced the sound; this fabricated communication she was weaving into the structure of other highly evidential matter from the same source at the same sitting.

Now *what* next? Is this reasonably credible? Even supposing that, purely theoretically, it might be regarded as what Mr. Maby calls "a bare possibility," I submit that practically, as a matter of common-sense, it is about as likely as that Dr. Goebbels will attend the Communion Service in St. Paul's next Sunday. The comments which the Medium thus deceived herself into, or pretended to be, clairaudiently hearing were:

Following upon an entirely unprompted question, in no way suggested by anything that had previously transpired, whether I had not had from the communicator "a sharp loud knock, not like the usual ones," and my enquiries as to when and where were meant, came the following:

"Where the water is, he says (correct); he says he gave you a special kind of knock and you *must* have

heard it." On my admitting the fact, but explaining that I had concluded that the sound was that of an electric light switch—"He says no, it wasn't. 'It wasn't,' he says; 'It was *me*.' He sensed your doubt about it, and was disappointed. He says, 'It was *not* a light switch; it was *me*.'"

And we are asked to believe that the whole of this was pretended, imagined, subconsciously fabricated, what not, by the Medium, owing to this remarkable perception of hers of a forgotten incident! I may say that this Medium is not only a sincere, indeed, a religiously earnest Spiritualist, but is a highly cultured lady, who speaks fluently several European languages. Mevrouw Lotte Plaat (Baroness von Strahl) was celebrated for her psychic gifts not only in Holland, but in Britain and other European countries.* Her clairvoyant powers are such that on one occasion she was actually visited by a Berlin police emissary who induced her to accompany him from Holland to Berlin to assist the German police, by clairvoyance, in a matter of criminal investigation. Her husband was, till recently, occupying a high post in the diplomatic service of his country. So I should say that Mr. Maby's handsome expression "with all due respect to the lady Medium" is very much to the point indeed, were this "respect," undoubtedly so due, really being accorded. She does not see LIGHT, but as she has a keen sense of humour, it was a real pleasure to hand to her yesterday this last issue. Mr. Maby can take it from me that her enjoyment of his flattering reference was only exceeded by her delighted amusement at his quaint notion of her mental processes in mediumship.

It is the everyday stupid mistake of *soi-disant* "scientific criticism" studiously to ignore the psychology of conversational idiom which is often such a vitally significant feature of communications received through good Mediums; it is a *parti pris* in such circles. But I should not have expected an investigator of Mr. Cecil Maby's calibre, if he will allow me to put it so, to permit himself to slip, though by inadvertence, into even the appearance of so elementary an error as that.

Now, since Science is in question, I am sure that readers of this paper would be most interested to hear *what evidence Mr. Maby can produce* that this Medium or any other was performing, or can perform, any of these feats of mind-reading, and kindred psychological marvels. Personally, I never met with any that seemed to me to have a scrap of genuine validity. Indeed, my experience has been the exact reverse. Having often been able to convey a thought telepathically to someone else, I have therefore, for the sake of experiment, endeavoured, by intense mental concentration, to *cause* this Medium or that to refer to such-and-such a particular matter at a seance. Never once have I been in their case successful, and Sir Oliver Lodge told me that he had had just the same experience. During my experience of numbers of Mediums, I have encountered considerable data for forming the following tentative conclusions:

(1) That a discarnate being in sufficiently close contact with oneself can freely sense one's thoughts, whether during a seance or at other times, provided he be not in direct control of a Medium;

(2) But that *when in direct trance control of a Medium*, such an entity actually finds this power *temporarily inhibited*; it seems as if control of a physical organism entails some of the limitations attaching to the Medium's physical conditions of existence;

(3) That far from being easily able to read a sitter's thoughts, a Medium, in trance or otherwise, is, on the contrary, exceptionally *unsuggestible* in this direction.

But of course all this sort of thing is right out of the depth of people who are still groping myopically along on the old-fashioned S.P.R. lines.

Nevertheless, it is so nice (*sic*) to be carried back by thought-association to the fragrant memories of the dear dead Past, that I cannot resist the temptation

(Continued at foot of next column)

WHAT OUR READERS ARE SAYING

THE OBJECT OF SPIRITUALISM

SIR,—Mr. Harrison, in his letter (LIGHT, March 27th) on my article, "The Religious Aspects of Spiritualism," omits one important clause. I stated that the purpose of Spiritualism is not to supplant but to *rationalise* religious beliefs. I do not think this is contradicted by the quotation from *Spirit Teachings* that "The time is nearer than you think when the old Faith will be replaced by a higher and nobler one." The writer (Imperator) has in mind the theological beliefs in original sin, the vicarious atonement, and the final destiny of man either to heaven or hell based upon belief. He never denied the importance of the message of Jesus, which he constantly emphasises. What he means is that there will be a *new presentation* of the original beauty underlying the great Faiths of the world. It is in this sense that Spiritualism is new. It does not claim to give a higher ethic than is to be found in the great world-Faiths—an ethic so high that most of us fail to reach the standard it demands, and are only just beginning to realise the necessity of creating conditions that will make it easier to live the Golden Rule. W. H. EVANS.

BELIEF IN OBSESSION

SIR,—The belief in obsession is a modern version of the old idea of being possessed by a devil. In the old days it was a satellite of Satan, nowadays it is a disincarnate spirit. If in the old days one refused the prevailing beliefs, one would have been told they were wide of the mark, as Mr. Harrison suggests I am (LIGHT, March 20th), but would he be prepared to say that what is accepted as truth to-day will be truth in the future? You will never find a person obsessed who did not believe in the possibility of obsession. They, being weak-minded, are controlled by their own suggestions; the real self becomes subdued, and the character they have created takes control.

If we really understood what happens at death we would see how impossible is obsession or earth-bound spirits. After death we enter a dream state, where we gradually adjust ourselves to spirit life, dreams being given to bring home to us the true values of life. It is true, "we sleep until the Trumpet sounds," the Trumpet

(Continued from previous page)

to picture myself for a moment as still belonging to the Society from which, after twenty years of growingly dissatisfied membership, I finally resigned in disgust with its attitude and usages in discussing parapsychical phenomena. "My lady Medium," Mr. Maby says, "may very well have been tapping memories and ideas in my own mind." Now I cannot consent to be outdone in pseudo-psychological technique. Therefore, since the only reason why Mr. Maby considers that there is "a bare possibility that what I heard was a genuine rap" seems to be that he, his wife, his small son, and a maid heard an exactly similar sound, let me anticipate the S.P.R. itself by suggesting, true to classic form in those highbrow circles, that these four persons "may very well" have been experiencing a *telepathically-induced collective audible hallucination* (!) This would no doubt have been initiated by subconscious cerebration on the part of . . . well—boys are imaginative—why not say the small boy?

I hasten to add that this suggestion is not a "hypothesis" (*sic*) inviting serious consideration; personally, I have long outgrown that brand of "science." It is just a sort of playful little *tu quoque*, a humble libation poured out on the august altar of "critical science" in order to show that this sort of game can be played with the best by even so simple and credulous a person as myself, if he knows the ritual and the jargon; *et ego in Arcadia vixi*, in my unregenerate days. But serious or not, it is not a bit more improbable than what Mr. Maby says about *my* knock, is it now?

*I am practically the only person nowadays privileged to enjoy occasional utilisation of this lady's mediumistic services, owing to certain exacting and important work she is doing.

being the awakening into spirit life. The "Messenger" once replied, when I asked him where the soul went to when we were asleep, "In spirit, where all is safe."

To any responsible person interested I would willingly give an opportunity to meet the "Messenger."
104 Grosvenor Avenue,
Highbury, London, N.5. STANLEY BEDFORD.

GOD—OUR SPIRITUAL FATHER

SIR,—Quoting from Mr. Collins' very helpful article (LIGHT, March 27th) on the "Nature of God" "that Science regards belief in a *personal* God as somewhat childish," may I, as a humble student of Science, suggest that God as spirit (not a spirit) is our loving *spiritual* Father, since if we all have within us a spark of the Divine, this makes us His spiritual children.

That we should ever see God in human likeness is not probable (however it may help some to visualise Him while they are confined to the physical body), since even the spirit (etheric) body of mortals who have passed is eventually found unnecessary as taught by the "Lady Nona" (*This Egyptian Miracle*); "Some considerable time after death the etheric body may be discarded, as we discard the physical at death; the spirit of man having become pure mind, though still retaining individuality, may acquire even higher faculties and power, though she, like all spiritual beings, can project a thought form for clairvoyants to see."

Surely the essential man here and hereafter is mind—a portion of His spirit (the spark), and whether clothed in a visible physical body or without even the etheric counterpart to confine him (as in the highest spheres) he is always an individual. In this way may not we think of God as an individual and personal and a loving Spiritual Father?
G. VIVIAN.

SPIRIT-GUIDANCE

SIR,—With regard to Mr. B. Abdy Collins' article in LIGHT, March 27th, I should like to make the following observation:—On the question of an individual and personal God, it seems that people are too prone to take the view of God being representative of themselves—largely due, no doubt, to the influence of the various religious cults handed down through the ages from the time when primitive man worshipped images and totems wherein God was represented, or by a person impersonating the God, for the purpose of the ritual then in vogue.

Now that the present outlook has so broadened, a wider and more comprehensive view of God must be taken, and people must learn to grasp a more widely embracing entity, and not an individual giving personal guidance. That guiding control is left to those who have passed through this life on to the next stage, who, in their turn, will be passing on to the higher spheres, while others from this plane take over the control or guidance of those in the earth. THOMAS SUTTON.

MAKING SPIRITUALISM ACCESSIBLE

SIR,—Mr. David Dutton's admirable letter on "Making Spiritualism Accessible" (LIGHT, March 27th) has suggested to me that members of the public, who are being seriously drawn to Spiritualism, would be grateful for a syllabus of reading. It is so important that people should acquire their knowledge in easy stages. Would it not be possible to have pamphlets printed which gave titles of books to read first, and others to follow on? These pamphlets could be left for distribution at Spiritualist Churches. At present many people are attracted originally by the announcement of clairvoyance; but are sufficiently impressed to feel a desire to know about Spiritual truths. If this desire was directed at an early stage of enquiry it might be turned into a really practical effort to acquire knowledge. Also the co-operation of booksellers might be enlisted, I am sure enterprising booksellers would be glad to have titles mentioned to them, which they, in turn, could recommend to any customer who is enquiring for books on Spiritualism.
(Miss) A. L. SHERWIN.

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